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Statement submitted by Board of Certified Safety Professionals, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

According to *Decent Work and the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guidebook on SDG Labour Market Indicators*, occupational safety and health are central to Sustainable Development Goal 8 — Decent Work and Economic Development. It also points out that working conditions are an important determining factor of overall living standards for workers and their families.

As progress is being made to create decent work for all by increasing employment opportunities for young people, it is important to recognize that youth between the ages of 15 and 24 suffer the highest rates of work-related injuries. As indicated by the International Labour Organization, lack of adequate personal protective equipment, insufficient awareness regarding safety standards and lack of access to proper training have resulted in young workers being injured at a disproportionate rate compared to any other age group in the workforce.

The International Labour Organization estimates that poor occupational safety practices cost the global economy nearly 3 trillion dollars. Additionally, when a young person sustains an injury in the workplace it can affect their future career opportunities, earnings, and overall well-being.

The International Labour Organizations' SafeYouth@Work Action Plan estimates that over 40 million young people enter the workforce each year. In many countries, youth will perform highly hazardous activities in industries like agriculture and construction. It is critical that we include basic occupational safety and health skills in the curriculum at the secondary level.

In addition to educating youth about practical safety skills in the workplace it is also important to raise awareness among youth about the safety profession. As demonstrated by several national and international occupational safety and health organizations, including the Board of Certified Safety Professionals, the safety profession provides high-demand, high-wage employment opportunities. Safety professionals are improving economic and social development by preventing harm to people, property, and the environment. As the economy grows, the need for qualified young professionals entering the safety profession becomes greater. The safety profession offers opportunities for individuals of varying levels of education and experience.

Collaboration between government, employers, young workers, and non-governmental organizations is crucial to creating occupational safety and health policies and standards to protect workers under the age of 18 in high risk industries — a key strategy for promoting decent work for youth.

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